

# Dublin Bay Discovery Centre

Pre Planning 2021



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council

# Discovery Centre Planning/Policy Context

- **Dublin City Development Plan**
  - To promote and upgrade visitor facilities at North Bull Island to raise awareness of biodiversity and promote nature conservation and manage recreation sustainably
- **Dublin City Parks Strategy 2019-2022**
  - To construct a new visitor centre subject to planning approval on Bull Island
- **North Bull Island Action Plan (Oversight Forum Established)**
  - Action 20 - Progress the planning for an accessible Interpretive Centre for education, interpretation, visitor management and research to support the nature conservation objectives of North Bull Island Nature Reserve, the vision of the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere and the goals of UNESCO





## Existing Interpretive Centre:

- Built in 1986
- Universal Access
- Environmental Impact
- Location
- Capacity
- Current condition





**BITHSFÉIR**  
Chuan Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin Bay  
**BIOSPHERE**



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Biosphere Reserves are places designated by UNESCO to find effective, creative ways for people and nature to thrive together. They have three functions;

**Conservation:** promoting the protection of habitats, species, ecosystems, landscapes and cultural values.

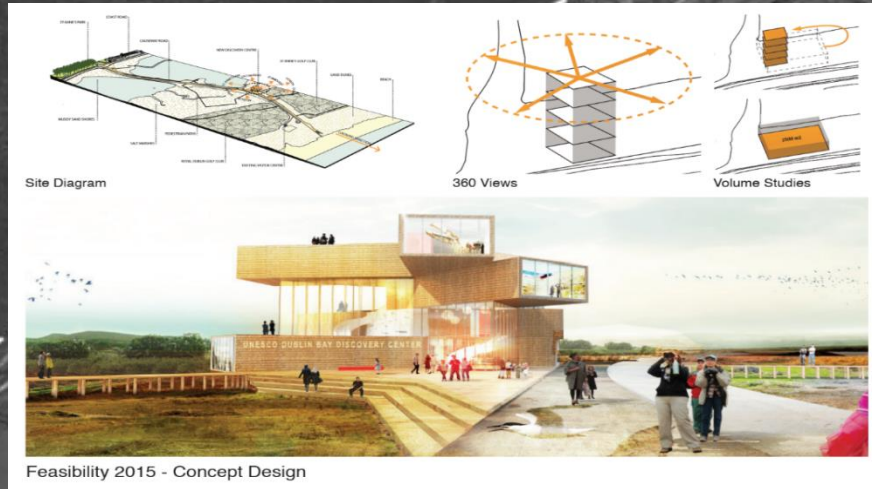
**Learning:** supporting education and research for a better understanding of nature and global issues.

**Development:** fostering a sustainable economy and society for people living and working in the area.

*“I had believed from a very early age that the most important knowledge was that which brought an understanding of how the natural world worked. It was not laws invented by human beings that interested me, but the principles that governed the lives of animals and plants;.....”* David Attenborough



*“Through interpretation comes understanding, through understanding comes appreciation, through appreciation comes protection.”* Freeman Tilden.



Site location, reclaimed land & 2015 Feasibility

Wadden Sea National Park Visitor Centre Denmark



Kristianstad Biosphere Reserve Visitor Centre Sweden



Design Team Appointed  
Consultation  
Site Investigations  
National & International Precedents  
Research  
Preliminary Design – Further Consultation

Castle Espie Wetland Centre County Down



The Sill: National Landscape Discovery Centre Northumberland







Kristianstad Biosphere Reserve Visitor Centre Sweden



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## Consultation

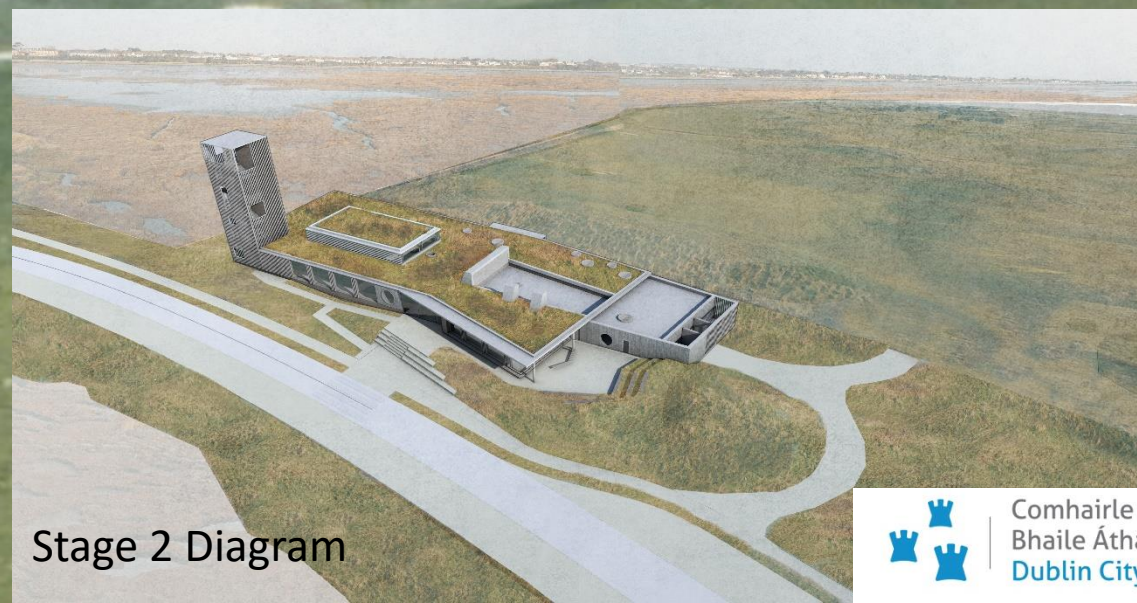
- Generally supportive with some concerns raised
- Attracting additional visitors to sensitive environment
- Parking, pedestrian & cycling
- Visual impact of the tower
- Tourism ?



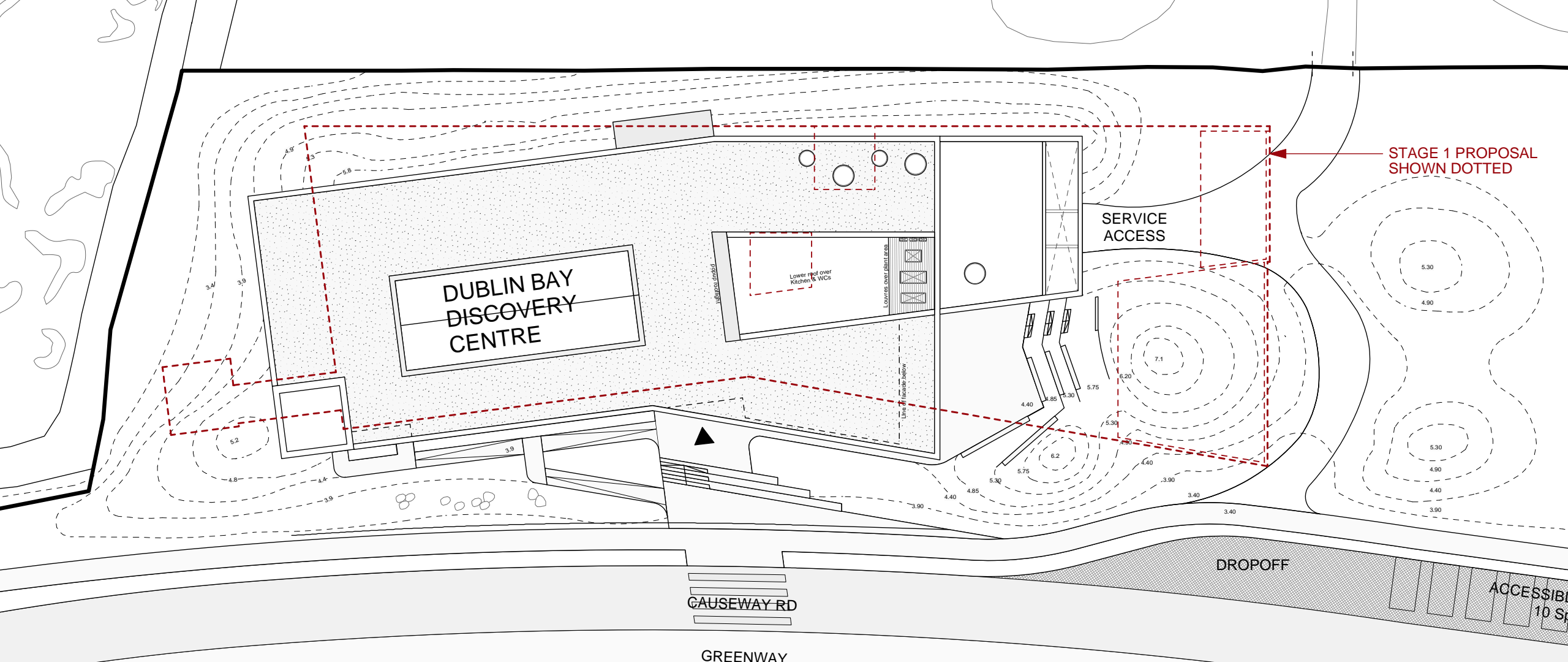
Stage 1 Design Proposal

## Response

- Emphasis on conservation, education & management - not a tourist attraction
- Parking: does not create significant extra visitors to island, new layout along causeway with greenway
- Tower height and mass reduced, engaged with building
- Building footprint reduced & first floor removed
- Sustainable timber structure 'touches ground lightly'
- Brown roof & mounding landscape around building



Stage 2 Diagram



STAGE 1 PROPOSAL SHOWN DOTTED

DUBLIN BAY DISCOVERY CENTRE

SERVICE ACCESS

CAUSEWAY RD

GREENWAY

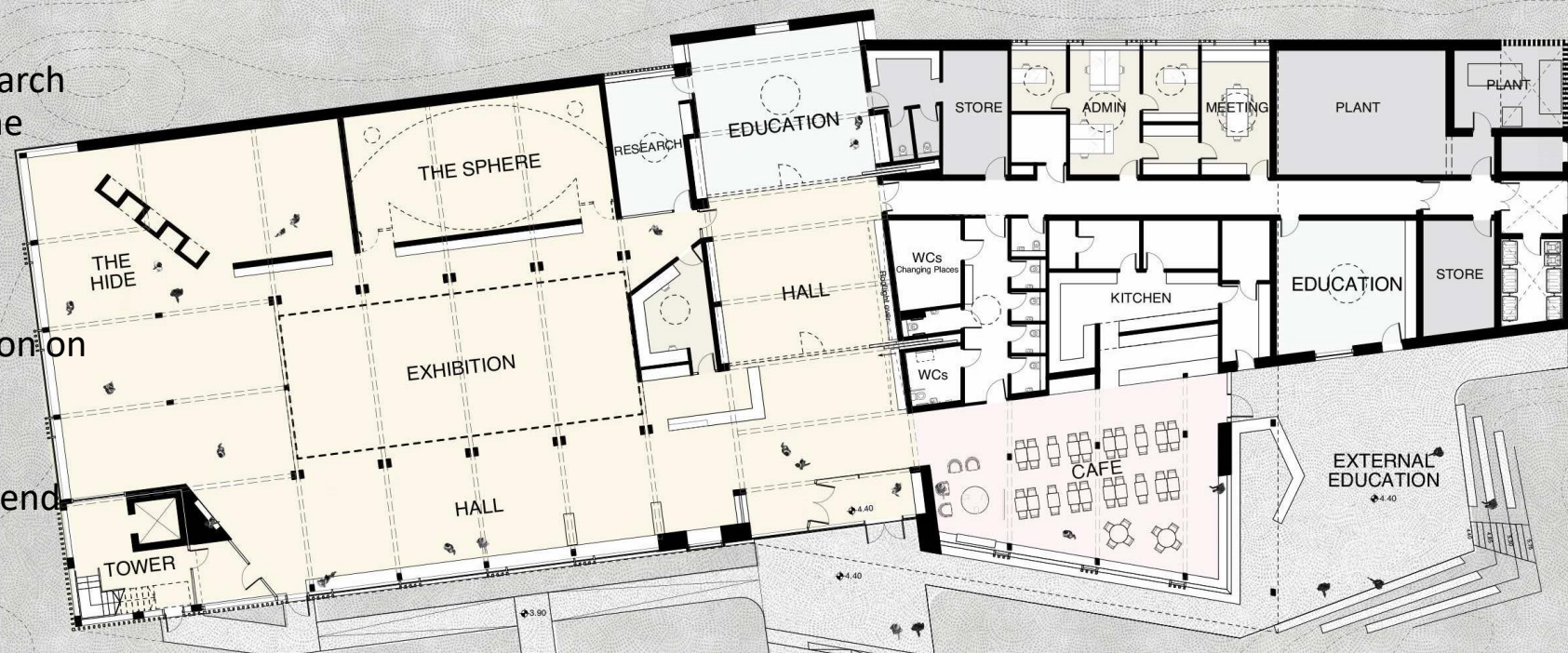
DROPOFF

ACCESSIBLE 10 SP

- 30% reduction in area
- Building plan responds to surrounding context – lagoons, road, golf course and reclaimed land
- Tower engaged with building
- Tower height & massing reduced:
- Brown roof
- Landscape mounding around building

Proposed Site Plan - Stage 1 outlined in red

- 80% public facing spaces to maximise public benefit of the centre
- 75% of this is dedicated for education, exhibition and research to support core functions of the centre
- Principal features include:
- Exhibition area containing an immersive, interactive exhibition on Bull Island and the Dublin Bay Biosphere
- Education space which can extend into the multi-use hall space
- Research room
- Education wet room and external education space
- Café
- Reception, information
- Nature Reserve HQ



Ground Floor Plan

- Tower structures are common in Ireland in both a symbolic and physical sense - round towers, tower houses, watch towers, fire towers, Martello towers, light houses, beacons, day marks, prospect towers and folly towers.
- Tower structures are particularly abundant along our coasts and form part of the built heritage around Dublin Bay
- Provide 360 degree views of the Dublin Bay Biosphere
- A gateway structure that marks the significance of the Biosphere
- Access for all - Unlocks a unique experience for people of all abilities



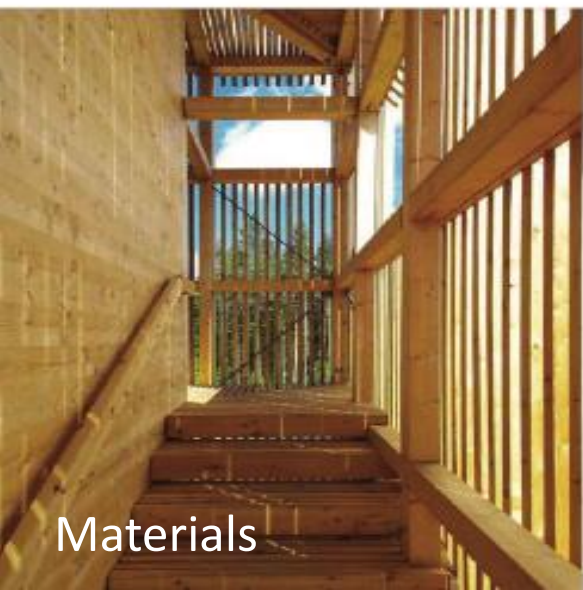
The Lookout Tower



Towers & structures around Dublin Bay



View from the lookout



Materials





View from the 'Half Moons'





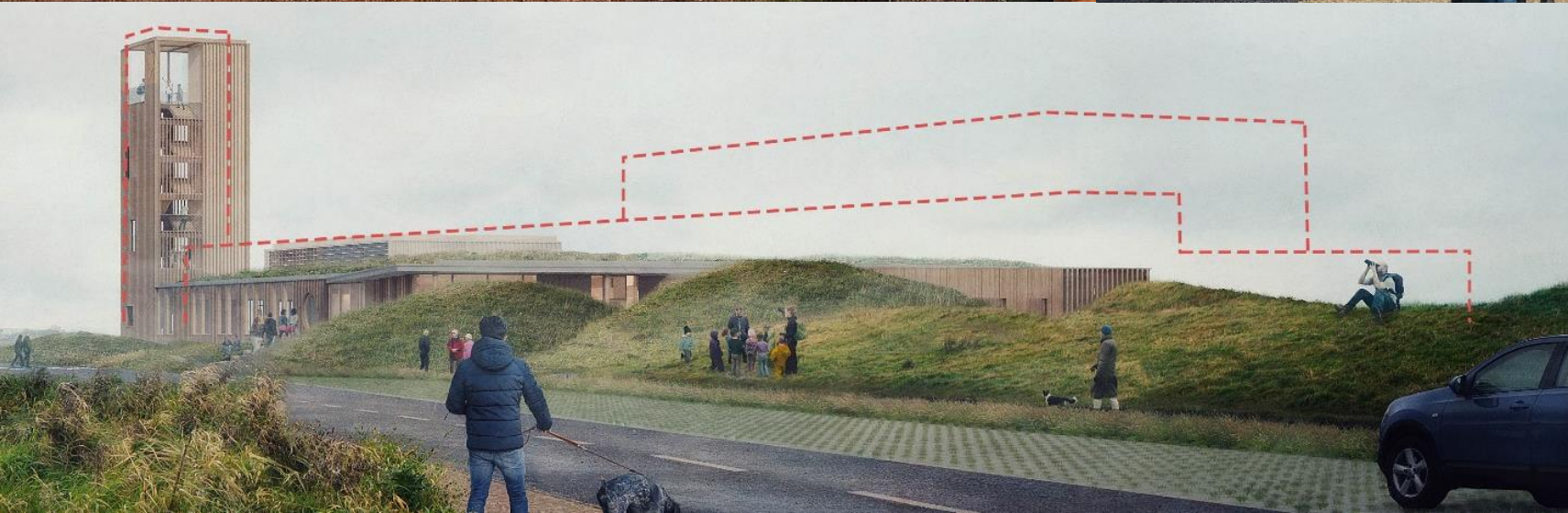
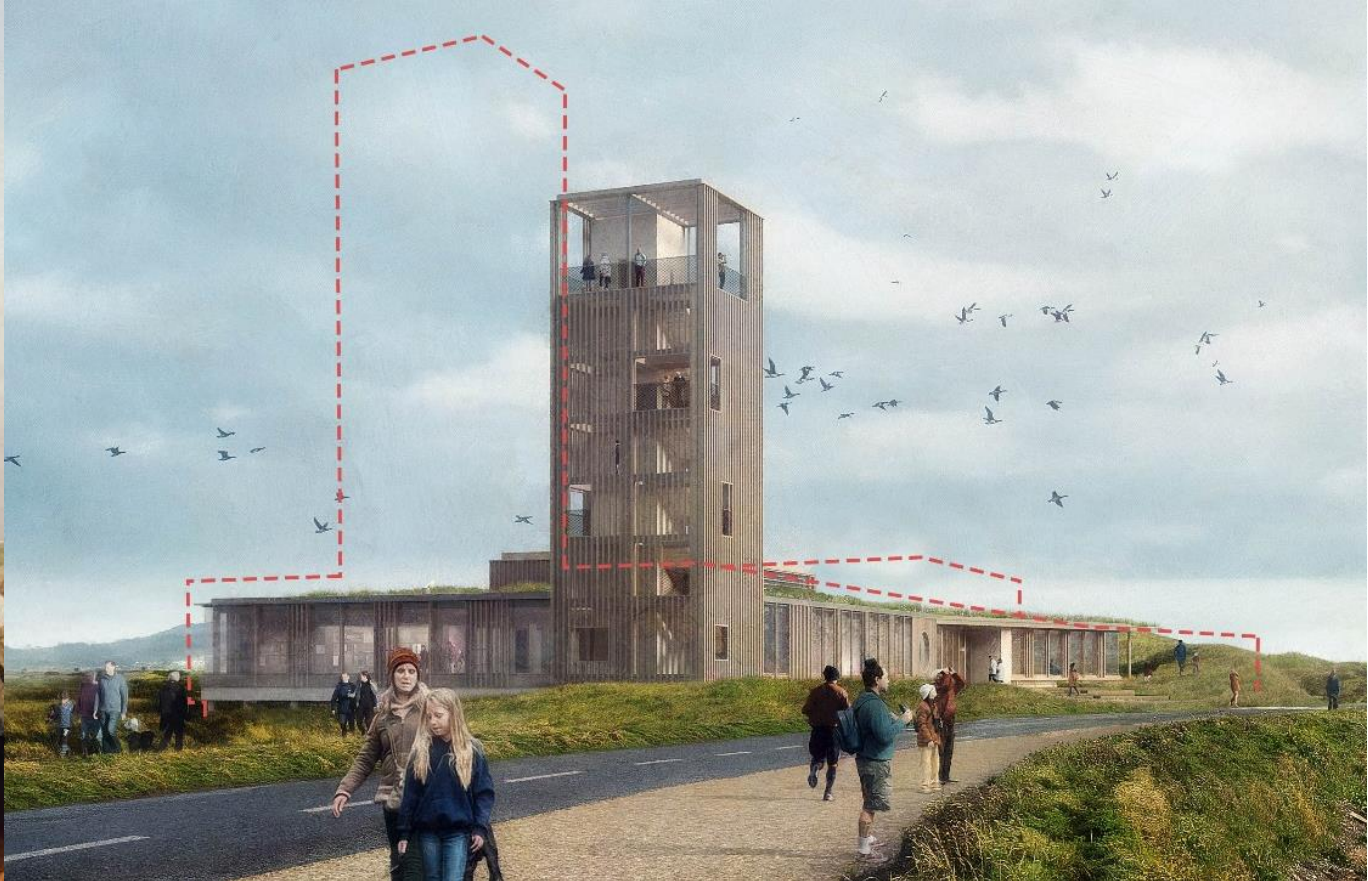
View from the Causeway



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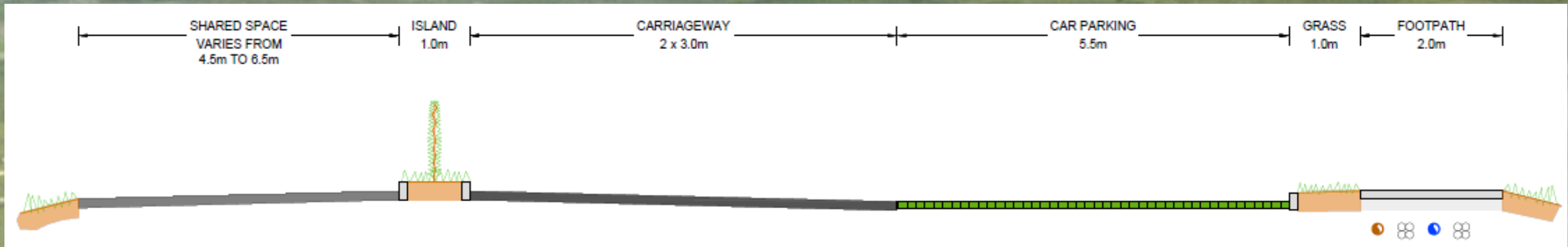


Approach from the Roundabout



# Causeway Road, Greenway & Parking

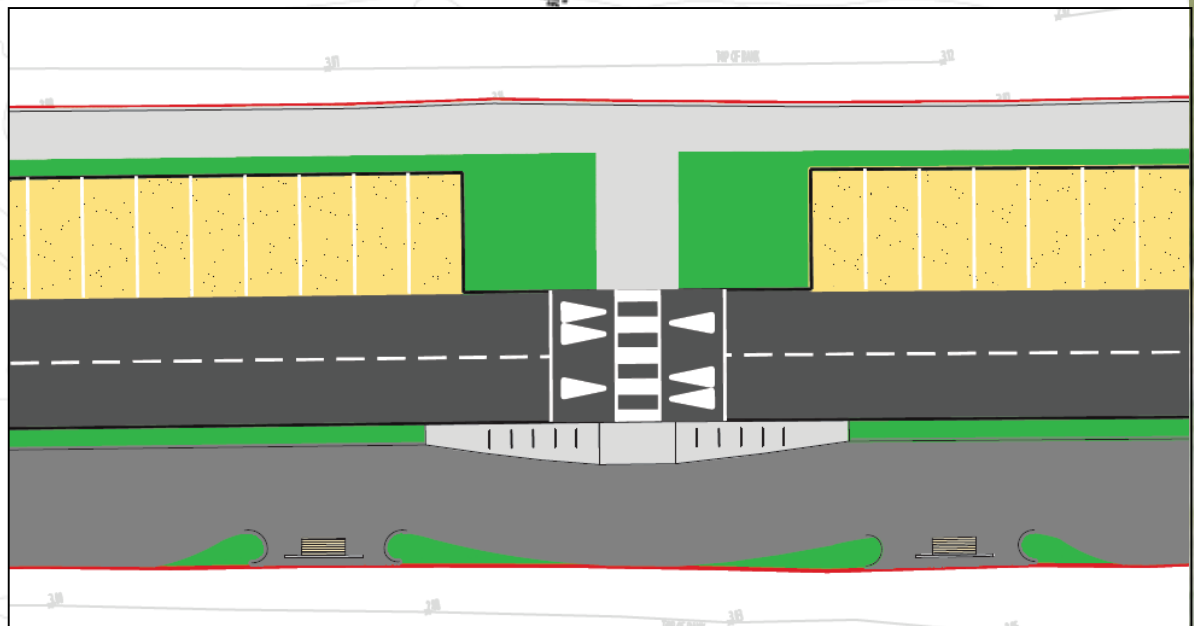
- Greenway maintained and extra bike stands to be provided, regular seating
- Wide parking spaces for up to 280 cars (permeable surface)
- Improved parking arrangements for disabled and elderly
- Discussions with Dublin Bus & Irish Rail re improved service
- Causeway Road surface Improvements – 15km Speed limit





12 no. PERPENDICULAR  
PARKING SPACES

Causeway road & Greenway layout



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# MANAGEMENT

- Nature Reserve/Biosphere HQ
- Existing Interpretive Centre demolished (attracts 20k visitors annually)
- Business Plan to cater for 45k paid visitors in Year 1 rising to 65k Year 5. Surveys indicate c. 1m visitors to Island in 2019
- Self funding model
- Management Setup to include North Bull Island Oversight Forum
- €14.5m total project cost





**Low Impact Universal Access with Interpretation at 'Half Moons'**

**Discovery Centre**

**Areas to be managed as feeding for Brent Geese etc**

**Existing Centre Demolished – Toilets and Accessible Parking Installed**

**Site Extents**



Scottish Seabird Centre, North Berwick



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Craigeith Zone

What to look for

- 

Look for seabirds nesting on the rocks.
- 

Look for seals resting on the rocks.
- 

Look for seabirds flying over the water.



wildlife wonder!

The sheer cliffs and rocky seabed around the Isle of May are a wildlife haven.

The cliffs continue below the waves. These waters are rich in life, providing seabirds and seals with essential food.

Look in the tank below to see some of the animals that live around the Isle of May National Nature Reserve.



## CARING FOR GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY

Scientists and collaborators from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) are working in more than 40 countries around the world.

Our work is concentrated in areas of high biodiversity which have a wide variety of plants, animals and habitats. Many are under threat through ecosystem destruction. This map shows the areas of botanical field research in 2019.



AREAS OF BIODIVERSITY  
2019



# VATTENSJUKT



"Hälsövränsnämnden finner det angeläget att omtalade vattensjuka och osunda träskmark snarest saneras... så länge inga olägenheter kan befaras uppstå och sotpippen där till skötes fullt tillfredsställande."

Hälsövränsnämnden, 1958

### Fåglar längs Linnérundan och i naturums närområde

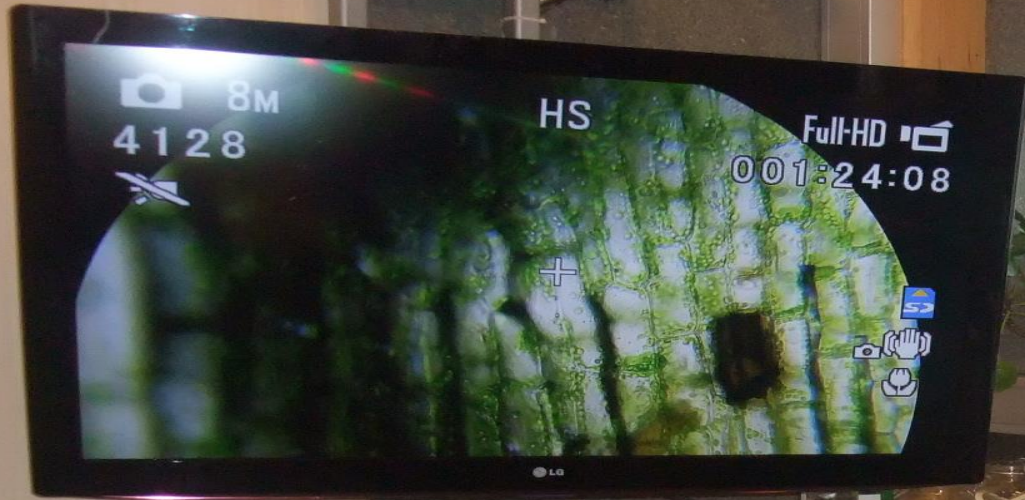


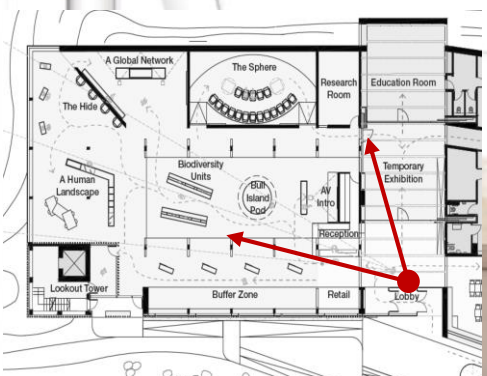
Häng på dig kikaren, ta med fågelboken och...  
Käna fåglarna längs Linnérundan. Här finns  
uppåt 150 arter varje år. Titta på kryssl  
intill och se vilka som har setts i år.  
Linnérundan är 6 km lång. De  
och videsnär, över strand  
nska. Hämta en k...



- Blå kricka
- Gråbrä
- Kulåsa
- Mörkt halskråk
- Rödingarna
- Silversam
- Erstallbocken
- Hovorn
- Kricka
- Punggräs
- Sjöstrand
- Skrattmåsar
- Ålsva
- Häger
- Kungsfågeln
- Mörkt sadel
- Rånsvan
- Sjökråk
- Falkar
- Örn
- Konstfågeln
- Mörkt sadel
- Rånsvan
- Sjökråk
- Falkar





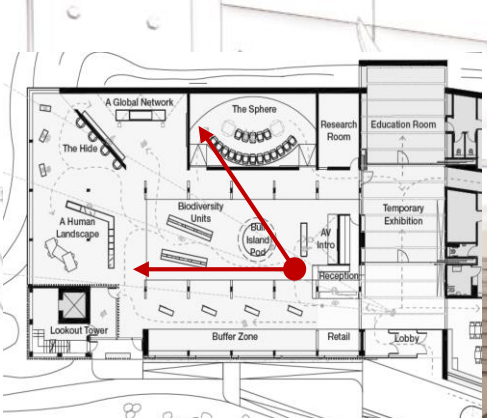


Exhibition Spaces

Information

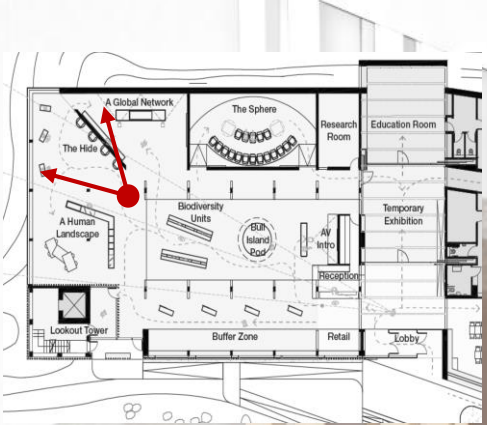
Multi Purpose

Reception Area



Main Exhibition Space

# Exhibition – Main Space



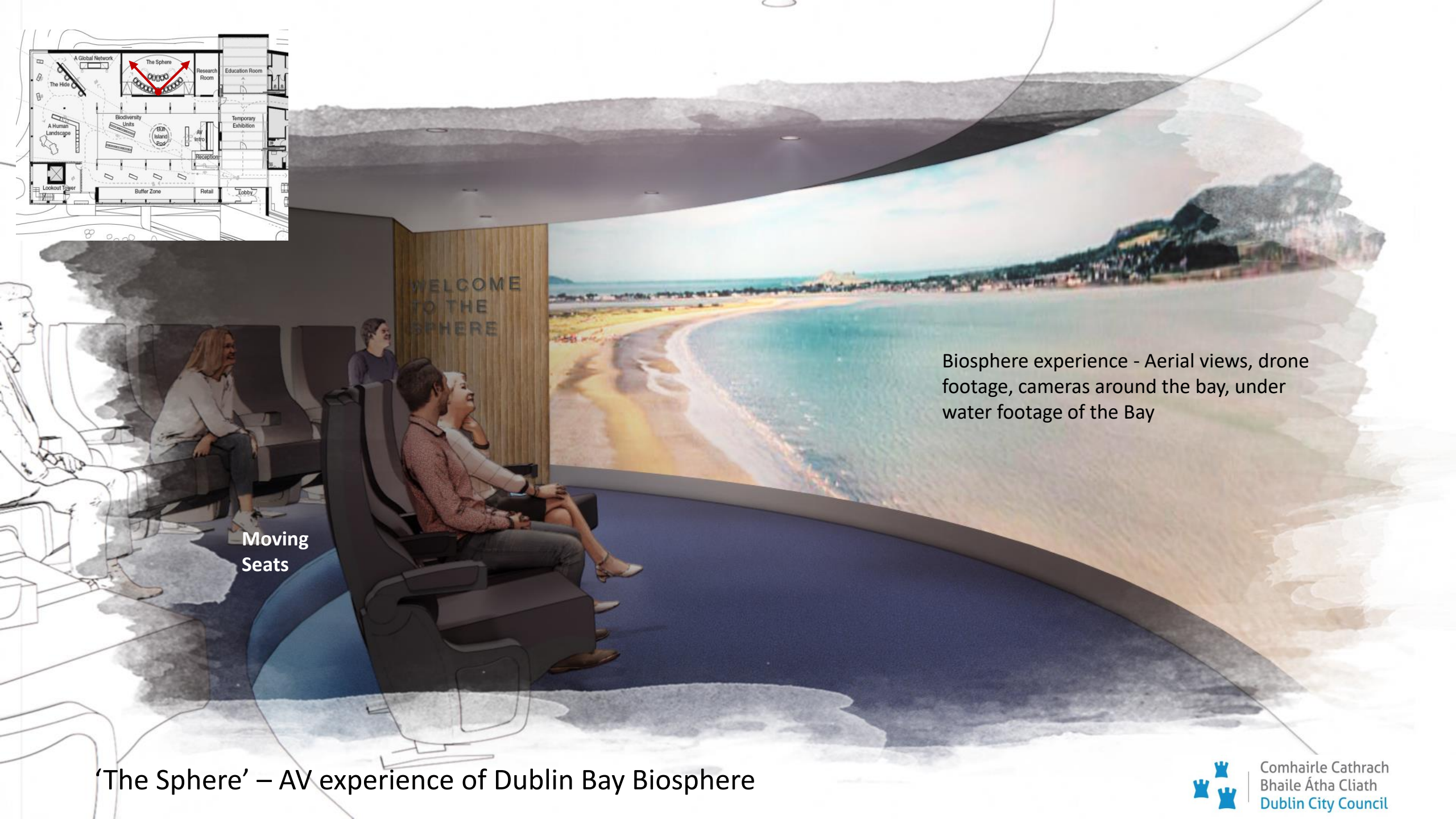
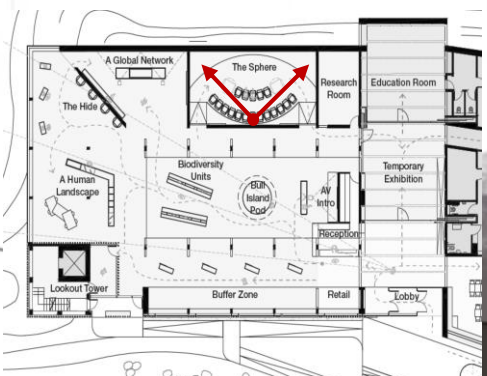
Views over North Lagoon

Cameras around the Biosphere



'The Hide' – Bird Watching & Cameras





WELCOME  
TO THE  
SPHERE

Biosphere experience - Aerial views, drone  
footage, cameras around the bay, under  
water footage of the Bay

Moving  
Seats

'The Sphere' – AV experience of Dublin Bay Biosphere

## Local Authority own development

- Screening-in for Appropriate Assessment
- Screening-in for Environmental Impact Assessment (because of potential significant impacts on the environment)
- Planning Application to An Bord Pleanála

## EIA: Key Considerations

- Site Location
- Biodiversity
- Water (including Flooding)
- Landscape and Visual
- Movement and Transport
- Interactions

## EIA Preparation

Working with DCC, Design Team etc  
Identify, avoid, mitigate significant negative impacts



# Next Steps

Consultation on Building Design/Planning Process

DCC Departments/Elec Reps/SPC/Area/Community/Users

Submit application, with EIAR and NIS to ABP

